

Amendment 20A to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 20A)

Frequently Asked Questions **September 2012**

What will Amendment 20A do?

Amendment 20A addresses the commercial wreckfish component of the snapper-grouper fishery, which is managed under an individual transferable quota program. Amendment 20A will:

- Identify and revoke inactive wreckfish shares, which commercial fishermen are not using.
- Redistribute revoked shares to active shareholders.
- Define a cap on the number of shares one entity may own.
- Establish an appeals process for determinations of share status and redistribution.

Who is affected by Amendment 20A?

- Commercial fishers with catch shares who fish for wreckfish in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone (3-200 miles offshore), off North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Why were the actions in Amendment 20A proposed?

- When the wreckfish individual transferable quota program for wreckfish was implemented in 1992, the total allowable catch for both the commercial and recreational sectors was set at 2 million pounds. Since 1992, fishermen have not come close to catching the 2 million pound limit.
- The wreckfish fishery has changed significantly over the past two decades. Most of the changes have to do with latent fishing effort.
- On April 16, 2012, the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment implemented a combined annual catch limit of 235,000 pounds whole weight for wreckfish.
- The Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment also allocated 95 percent of the total annual catch limit to the commercial sector, and 5 percent to the recreational sector.
- Therefore, the annual catch limit for the commercial sector is now 223,250 pounds whole weight.
- Actions included in Amendment 20A allow commercial fishermen with wreckfish shares to maximize harvest potential within the constraints of the new annual catch limit.

When will Amendment 20A be effective?

- The Council approved Amendment 20A on December 9, 2011, for review by the Secretary of Commerce.
- NOAA Fisheries approved Amendment 20A on April 10, 2012.
- Following comment periods on the notice of availability and the proposed rule for Amendment 20A, the final rule implementing the actions is effective as of **October 26, 2012**.

Where can I get more information on Amendment 20A and the Final Rule?

- Amendment 20A and the final rule may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SGAmendment20A.htm> and the Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.
- For more information, contact Nikhil Mehta at (727) 824-5305.